

# ANNUAL REPORT

## SEPTEMBER 2009 ~ 2010

### *Conservation In Jefferson County*

Since 1946, Jefferson County has been providing assistance to landowners to protect our soil and water quality. In 1982, the County officially established the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department. The department has been charged with administering State Statutes and County ordinances all leading to the conservation and protection of our natural resources. We are pleased to provide you with our 2009~2010 annual report. Anyone wishing further information on any of our programs is welcome to stop in or call for more details.

Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department  
Courthouse  
320 South Main Street  
Room 113  
920-674-7110 Phone 920-674-7114 Fax  
Hours of Business  
Monday ~ Friday 7:00 a.m. ~ 4:30 p.m.

### *Working Lands Initiative; The New Challenge*



In July 2009, Governor Doyle signed the new Working Lands Initiative (WLI) into law. As part of the biennial budget, WLI is expected to provide greater tax relief for farm owners, offer more protection to diminishing agricultural land and enhance protection of the soil and waters of our State.

Land Conservation Staff have been working on implementation strategies to transition landowners into the new program.

While WLI is similar to the old Farmland Preservation Program in many ways, there are some key changes.

The most notable change landowners will see is the calculation of the tax credit. The old Farmland Preservation Program used a formula based on income and property tax to calculate the credit. WLI switches to a straight per \$7.50 per acre credit for counties with exclusive agricultural zoning.

For many landowners, this credit will be an increase over the former calculation that statewide, averaged around \$3.50 per acre.

Other changes include, no minimum acreage requirement and new conservation compliance obligations

such as having and following a nutrient management plan. This requirement is for all cropped land, regardless of whether you are applying manure or commercial fertilizer. Livestock producers face stricter regulations concerning manure management.

Other components of WLI include a program for the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements and the ability to form Agricultural Enterprise Areas that will receive a greater credit of \$10 per acre.

In the next few years, staff will be actively working with County landowners to insure a smooth transition into the new program.

#### *Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Committee*

Michael Burow, Chairman  
Greg Torres, Vice Chairman  
Walt Christensen, Secretary  
Carlton Zentner, Member  
Karen Christian, FSA Rep

#### *Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department*



Pictured left to right:

Nancy Lannert, Resource Conservationist

Mark Watkins Director

Patricia Cicero, Water Resources Mgmt. Specialist

Beth Klotz, Administrative Clerk

Gerry Kokkonen, GIS/Land Use Specialist

Joseph Strupp, Resource Conservationist

Janelle Dunlavy, Student Intern (not pictured)



# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### ***Farmland Preservation (FPP) and Working Lands Initiative (WLI)***

The Farmland Preservation is a program where landowners in exclusive agricultural zoning can qualify for a tax credit. The credit is part of their filing of Wisconsin State Income tax. Land enrolled in FPP must be covered by an approved soil and water conservation plan. Starting in 2010, the FPP program has been included as part of the State's new Working Lands Initiative. The Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department has been working with County landowners to transition into the new program. The following is a list of activities associated with the two programs:

#### ***FPP ~***

- Manages 994 conservation plans covering 145,500 acres,
- Assisted 13 new participants become eligible for the tax credit,
- Processed 4 notices of non-compliance or non-participation,
- Conducted 176 on-farm status reviews,
- Implemented a new Annual Certification Processing Fee to help defray program costs.

#### ***WLI ~***

- Cooperating with Wisconsin Department of Agriculture to notify current FPP participants of the new WLI,
- Developed a WLI compliance certification form,
- Preparing newsletter mailing dedicated to WLI (to be published End of August, 2010),
- Established the WLI Information Hotline and dedicated email.

### ***Soil Conservation***

Part of the mission of the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department is to insure that farmland remains productive for generations to come. Through cooperative partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency, the LWCD works with Jefferson County producers to recommend and install Best Management Practices that will control soil loss and improve water quality. The Land and Water Conservation Department:



- Conducts an Annual Transect Survey to determine trends in cropping and soil loss. This year's survey shows that 87% of fields surveyed were at or below tolerable soil loss, up three percent from 2009. The average soil loss in Jefferson County was 2.2 tons per acre per year. Approximately 14% of the land was farmed using no-till methods and 55% was minimum tilled. Less than one percent was conventional tilled (moldboard plowed). The remaining ground was not tilled as it was either no longer being farmed or in a conserving use cover such as Conservation Reserve Land or hay.
- Develops contracts for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a State/Federal and County partnership. During the period of time covered by this report, 8 contracts were developed, enrolling 24.3 acres. These were all stream buffer projects.
- Provide technical assistance to NRCS for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through a contribution agreement, LWCD staff determines eligibility of land for CRP. Additionally staff designs and lays out practices such as contour and riparian buffers and develops contracts and maintenance plans.

### ***Committee Member Changes***

*The Land and Water Conservation Department says good by to George Jaeckel who served on the committee in 2009 and hello to Walt Christensen. Walt joined the committee in May, 2010. The Department looks forward to working with Walt and the returning members of the committee.*



# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### *Water Conservation*

Maintaining and enhancing ground and surface water quality is critical to the health, safety and recreation of residents and visitors of Jefferson County. The following are water quality and water conservation activities the Department has engaged in:

- Final report on pollution entering Rock Lake was completed.
- Aquatic plant survey and management plan completed for Lower Spring Lake. The Department worked cooperatively on the plan with the Lake Management District. The District reimbursed the Department for the time the Summer Intern spent on the project.
- Two wells were properly abandoned reducing the potential of runoff from entering groundwater.
- Assisted the Zoning Department with shoreland-related issues. The Department assisted with the writing of a grant for Zoning that will be used to update the shoreland zoning ordinance in order to meet new State requirements.
- Assistance was provided to various landowners and associations. Assistance ranged from help with grant applications to advice on shoreland habitat restoration and erosion control.
- Cost sharing was provided for 2 lake shore habitat restorations encompassing 9,665 square feet and one riprap project along 75 feet of a stream bank.
- Organized a workshop to train citizens on monitoring for invasive aquatic species. Additionally, trained one citizen water monitor for Rock Lake.

### *Grants and Budgets*



Much of the funding for the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department comes from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Department actively looks for outside sources of revenue to reduce the amount of County Levy dollars requested. The Department also completed the update of the Land and Water Resource Management Plan covering 2011 to 2020 that will allow for continued grant funding eligibility from DATCP. The plan will provide guidance in directing the activities of the Department over the next decade.

- Applied for and received operational grants from the DATCP totaling \$158,000.
- Entered into a contribution agreement to complete CRP contracts with NRCS for \$7,500.
- Received WLWCA grant funding to hire a student intern.
- Established a certification fee for FPP to offset the cost of mailings and database maintenance. Approximately \$4,500 in revenue has been generated by this fee.
- Received \$20,000 in Land and Water Resource Management cost sharing dollars from DATCP.
- Received \$12,000 in State Grant funding from DATCP for nutrient management cost sharing.
- Generated \$8,400 in gross revenue from the Annual Tree and Shrub sale.
- Fazed out County Cost Sharing program due to funding cuts.
- Begun preparation of bid packages for County Farm Lease set to expire in October 2010.

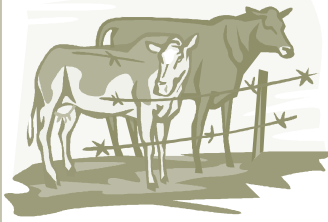
### *Information and Education Activities*

- Published two editions of *Conservation Counts*, the Departmental newsletter that is distributed to over 2,100 households.
- Prepared a Departmental display for the Jefferson County Fair.
- Participated in the Annual 4th Grade Farm Day giving presentations to over 800 students and their teachers.
- Partnering with NRCS, FSA and the Town and Country Resource Conservation and Development Agency to begin planning for Rural Landowner Conference to be held in 2011.

# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### ***Nutrient Management and Livestock***



Under State Statute NR151, agricultural producers are required to follow conservation performance standards. These rules regulate manure management and require the use of soil conservation and nutrient management plans by all producers. Additionally under State Statute and County Ordinance, livestock producers wishing to start or expand a herd of over 150 animal units (one animal unit equals 1,000 pounds of animal weight) must apply for a Livestock Siting Conditional Use Permit. The Department works cooperatively with the Zoning Department on these permits.

If livestock producers are not expanding their animal numbers but are building, modifying or abandoning manure storage facilities, the Department requires a permit under the County Manure Storage Ordinance. For the 2009 ~2010 report year, the Department:

- Issued two permits for new manure storage facilities under the County Manure Storage Ordinance.
- Cost shared with a landowner for proper closure of an abandoned manure storage facility.
- Cost shared \$29,708 with nine landowners for nutrient management plans covering 1,132 acres. Additionally, 26 plans were received and reviewed by the Department.
- Investigated 9 manure management related complaints with corrective action taken as needed.
- Reviewed two Livestock Siting Permit applications and provided information to the Zoning Department on compliance issues.

### ***Geographic Information and Cartography***

- Developed manure restriction maps for nutrient management plans covering over 3,000 acres on 38 farms.
- Provided assistance with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis for Lake Ripley Management Plan.
- Assisted with cartography for the Glacial Heritage Area Water Trail Map and Guide.

### ***Wildlife and Habitat***



The Land and Water Conservation Department engages in the following activities to enhance wildlife habitat:

- For the 2009/2010 program year, 8,400 trees/shrubs were sold through the Annual Sale. Eleven species were offered through the sale which starts in the fall of each year.
- Coordinate the rental of tree planters and sprayers with the DNR Foresters.
- Assists the DNR with the Wildlife Damage and Abatement Program that reimburses crop producers for damages caused by deer, geese and turkey.
- Continues to work with the DNR on the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program.



### ***Non-Metallic Mining***

To operate a non-metallic mine (sand, gravel, stone and topsoil) for commercial extraction, quarry owners must apply for a Non-Metallic Mining permit. Part of the permit process is the submission of a reclamation plan detailing how the land will be restored when the quarry is no longer in use.

The Highway 26 by-pass project has resulted in the opening of several quarry sites. Under NR135, these sites are exempt from the permit process however the land must still be reclaimed once the sites are closed.

- Twenty-seven non-metallic mining permits covering nearly 500 acres were issued and monitored. Two of these permits were new sites.

# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### *Other Activities*

- Supervised maintenance of the Jefferson County Potters Field.
- Mediated the resolution of access issues on the County Farm with the Department of Transportation due to the construction of the Highway 26 by-pass, resolving four of the eight access point problems.
- Hired a student intern with Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association grant funding.
- Department Director continued participation in County Advisory Committee with NRCS and FSA.
- Contracted with Jefferson County Highway Department to raze the old Quonset hut on the County Farm.



### *Looking Ahead*

*As we enter into the second decade of the new millennium, the Land and Water Conservation Department faces new challenges. Along with ever-present challenges in funding, the State has added additional responsibilities to Staff to implement the new Working Lands Initiative. The Department works steadfastly in responding to the concerns of the citizens of Jefferson County who are demanding more accountability towards the protection of our natural resources. Citizens are more aware of issues concerning pollution, mishandling of manure and other waste products; they want cleaner and safer water. As always, the Department will strive to meet these concerns of our citizenry.*

#### *Future Goals and Activities ~*

- *Organize training sessions for farmers to write their own nutrient management plans*
- *Hold workshops to educate landowners on Working Lands Initiative conservation requirements*
- *Explore new sources of revenue*
- *Establish an electronic tracking system for NR151 and Working Lands Initiative compliance*
- *Add more features to the Department's web site*
- *Monitor developments in the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer*
- *Establish the ability to accept the use of credit cards towards payment of certification fee and for tree sales*
- *Monitor new developments in manure management*
- *Serve on State-wide panel for the Livestock Siting Law update*
- *Serve on Rock River Recovery Agriculture Sector Team*



# Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department

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### *Partnering Agencies and Contacts*

The Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department works cooperatively with a number of State and Federal Agencies. The following is a list of agencies and contacts:

#### ~Federal~

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Dennis Vollmer, District Conservationist  
134 West Rockwell Street  
Jefferson WI 53549  
920-674-2020, ext. 104

United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal Damage Abatement Program  
David Terrell  
1-800-433-0663

Farm Service Agency (FSA)  
Debra Schut, Executive Director  
134 West Rockwell Street  
Jefferson WI 53549  
920-674-2020 ext. 107

Town and County Resource Conservation and  
Development (RC&D)  
Craig Ficenece, RC&D Coordinator  
134 West Rockwell Street  
Jefferson WI 53549  
920-541-3208

#### ~State~

*DNR Foresters*  
MaryAnn Buenzow (South half Jefferson Co.)  
2514 Morse Street  
Janesville WI 53546  
608-743-4830

*DNR Conservation Wardens*  
Ryan Ellifson (South half Jefferson Co.)  
920-674-5880

Randy Stampfl (North half Jefferson Co.)  
N7725 Hwy 28  
Horicon WI 53032  
920-387-7884

David Walz (North half Jefferson Co.)  
920-262-9508

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer  
Protection (DATCP)  
Bureau of Land and Water Resources  
Kathy Pielsticker, Director  
PO Box 8911  
Madison WI 53708-8911

#### *~Working Lands Initiative Contacts~*

State Web site: <http://workinglands.wi.gov>

State Email: [DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov)

Jefferson County WLI Hotline: 920-674-8776

Jefferson County Email: [Workinglandsinfo@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:Workinglandsinfo@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

*Since society as a whole depends on the produce of the land for its present and future existence, society as a whole must share in the responsibility and costs of maintaining land in a productive state.*

*Hugh Hammond Bennett*

*The Father of Soil Conservation*